

SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
Minutes of the Meeting
July 17-18

Members present:

- July 17-Mr. Staton, Mr. A. Martin, Mrs. Cooper, Mr. Daniel, Mr. Drew, Sen. Fair, Mr. G. Martin, Rep. Harrell, Mrs. Hoag, Mr. Lightsey, Mrs. Marlowe, Mr. Stowe, Supt. Tenenbaum, Rep. Walker, Mrs. Williams, Mr. Wilson
- July 18- Mr. Staton, Mr. A. Martin, Mrs. Cooper, Mr. Daniel, Mr. Drew, Sen. Fair, Mr. G. Martin, Mrs. Hoag, Mr. Lightsey, Mrs. Marlowe, Mr. Stowe, Rep. Walker, Mrs. Williams, Mr. Wilson

Guests present:

- July 17-Governor Sanford, Rep. Sheheen, Sen. Setzler, Rep. Townsend, Mr. Barnet, Mr. McTeer, Mrs. Berry, Dr. Everson, Dr. Gummerson, Mr. Smith, Mr. Fields

Staff present:

- July 17-18-Dr. Anderson, Mrs. Barton, Mrs. Elmore, Dr. Horne, Mr. Potter, Mrs. Allison, Mrs. Heinsohn, Ms. Bartlett, Mr. Hancock
- July 17 only-Mrs. Nichols, Mr. Willis, Mr. Bell
- July 18 only-Mrs. Spearman

Observers present:

- July 17- Mrs. Townsend, Mr. Price, Mr. Cahoun, Mr. Halligan, Mrs. McGinnis, Mr. Robinson, Mrs. Landrum
- July 18-Mr. Price, Mr. Halligan, Mr. Robinson, Mrs. Landrum

Thursday

I. Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Staton welcomed members and guests to the meeting. He asked new members to introduce themselves to the group. He then asked others present to introduce themselves.

Mr. Staton outlined four objectives for the two-day meeting: (1) deepen our understanding of the achievement challenge; (2) understand the issues impacting on school finance; (3) establish plans for 2003-04; and (4) cement working relationships.

II. School Performance: Correlates and Questions

Mr. Potter presented summary data on the performance of schools over time and student performance matched across three years. Members noted the need to link changes in student performance to programs and teacher performance and discussed the need for unique student and teacher identifiers that could enable research at a more granular level.

III. The Relationship Between Income and Achievement

Dr. Miley presented data examining each of the EOC-chosen measures to determine achievement of the 2010 goal. There was discussion of the need to move on each measure as well as caution in interpreting rankings. The Miley data also documented the interrelationship between achievement and personal income.

IV. School Finance

Mr. Fields facilitated the discussion among current and former EOC members, legislators and Governor Sanford. Gov. Sanford began with the principle that no student should be held captive to geography. Participants discussed the models included in retreat materials. Among the issues raised were the following:

- How should SC account for local contributions? Are local contributions part of the state revenue base or are they limited to the community generating the funds?
- What is the state responsibility in meeting the obligations to the students of SC?
- Are we funding a minimally adequate education or to meet the individual needs of all students?
- What is the cost of adequately prepared and effective teachers?
- If the fundamental mission is to prepare a workforce, what are the services needed and how does SC provide those services equitably?
- Is it adequacy or equity? Are the inequities growing?
- Is the problem the number of dollars or how those dollars are used?
- What is the balance between state and local responsibility and control?
- How do H4410 and H4411 address these issues?
- What do we need to ensure good teachers in every classroom and effective leaders in every school?
- What safeguards should be included in a public education funding system that relies totally on sales tax revenues?
- At what level (4K, 5K, etc.,) should early childhood education be funded?
- Who has the ability to solve the problem?

The members discussed spending patterns including the principle that spending more or less does not equal results, but spending too little in very poor areas is a problem. Members asked about the development of a model that begins with teaching and adds what is needed to achieve improved academic results for all students regardless of where they live.

There followed a discussion of the incentives needed to attract and retain quality teachers. Members discussed the need for supportive administrators; calendar

options to support other interests, including family; meaningful professional development; substitute teacher training and other factors in addition to salary. Members suggested that a compendium of incentives be identified.

Supt. Tenenbaum detailed the Progress Energy (formerly CP&L) Executive Institute in partnership with the Center for Creative Leadership.

There was discussion of how we move our schools forward to meet the 2010 goal.

Friday

V. Reactions to the Thursday Discussion

Members discussed the need to move beyond conversation about the problem into action. Mr. Lightsey pointed out that SC may be good at incremental change but that dramatic, even transformational change is needed. Rep. Walker and others discussed citizen dissatisfaction with property taxes and that equitable meant creating circumstances in which students had equal opportunity to achieve. Mrs. Marlowe discussed the challenges to the system to educate all children; children who struggle in school need extra support but the system also must serve students who can achieve at the highest levels. There was general agreement that there would not be an infusion of large amounts of money and that the committee needed to identify programs and initiatives which will have the greatest impact on achievement and which will allow SC to reach its 2010 goal.

Members discussed teacher compensation and recognition programs including the Teacher Assistance Program, the NBPTS, and performance-linked compensation systems. Some questioned how we build leadership and if we should permit principals to make the compensation decisions.

The staff was questioned about historic test performance. Testing histories are to be researched.

There was some discussion of the need to extend eligibility or hours of early childhood programs and how to integrate the programs across agencies.

Members agreed that we needed to focus on credible data systems to enhance decisions and “bottom up” school financing policies; that is, determining what is needed and funding that. The staff was asked to build several models from that premise. Mr. Daniel urged the EOC to focus on two issues: the achievement gap and funding problems.

The staff discussed the proposal to build a data model that is linked to classroom practices and policies.

VI. Objectives and Critical Actions

Members discussed areas for objectives and critical actions and asked the staff to digest the comments summarized below and develop statements for the August meeting:

1. Finance

Define adequate funding needed to achieve the state's goal including a provision for poverty. Work with staff of House and Senate subcommittees to build model and complete by Jan 1 or sooner if possible and accurate.

Determine if certain things in requirements in statute are unnecessary. Build a model assuming no funding increases – redistribute existing allocation based on priorities.

Determine what it will take to retain and attract quality teachers for every classroom – establish a statewide teacher salary schedule.

Use factors instead of only dollars. More flexibility at the local level and concern with shift of burden from state to local for funding (example, benefits)

Question raised about whether to put out a dollar figure to advocate (base student cost)

Concern about total elimination of property taxes as source of revenue for schools (sales tax revenue declines and ability to use as tax deduction) be sure objectives can be met for the long-term of the system for operations

Develop different scenarios giving pros and cons of each (concern there is not enough data to accomplish this)

Broadcast message that lottery money is going to scholarships (higher education)

2. Database

Need student and teacher identifier to utilize data system more efficiently (expedite for use this year so next year's retreat can include factors that correlate to high student achievement)

3. Leadership

Professional development for school leaders that can be modeled statewide and ensure salaries are at levels needed to retain top leaders.

4. Eliminate Achievement Gap

Implement a task force to study factors that cause gaps and strategies to motivate elimination of the gap.

5. Professional Development
Examine the quality of what is being offered and determine if it is working
6. Technical Assistance
Evaluate system for technical assistance for implementation inequities and continuity (long-term) and fairness (example should not tolerate unsatisfactory schools in wealthy districts)
Systemic change needed within schools receiving technical assistance
7. Relationship Building w/General Assembly
Advocacy needed to remain credible with General Assembly
We should recommend things that don't work and when we recommend things to do, we should have facts/data to back up reasons for doing so.
"EOC must become the Alan Greenspan and EF Hutton of Public Education."
8. Reevaluation of State Assessment
Evaluate cost and effectiveness of open-ended questions – what is the benefit versus less expensive multiple choice
Return time for results
Teacher use of data for classroom practices
9. Advocacy w/Statewide communities
Continue to get EOC into the public as influencer and take advocacy issues to the public
Important to seek teacher input in decision-making

Mr. Staton reiterated the retreat objectives and asked members for final comments. Members agreed that the EOC should have additional "retreat-like" meetings to facilitate deeper discussions.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.